

EZULWINI DECLARATION ON REGIONAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA

Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland, 24th March 2017

We African Ministers responsible for Civil Aviation, meeting in Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland on 24 March 2017, on the occasion of the Forum on Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) for Global Aviation Safety organized by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Kingdom of Swaziland in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);

Mindful of the Convention on International Civil Aviation signed in Chicago on 7 December 1944 (Chicago Convention);

Mindful of ICAO Assembly Resolutions A39-12 and A39-14 that, in particular, encourage Member States to develop sustainable solutions and to foster the creation of regional or sub-regional partnerships to address their common problems related to safety oversight capabilities, and of the expected benefits associated with RSOOs;

Mindful of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in June 1991;

Mindful of the existing Regional Economic Communities (RECs) established in the Continent;

Mindful of the strong links between the Strategic Objectives of ICAO and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in recognition that safe and secure aviation and global connectivity contribute significantly to socio-economic development;

Mindful of the African Civil Aviation Policy (AFCAP) adopted by the Second Conference of the AU Ministers of Transport, in Luanda, Angola on 25 November 2011 and the strategies and commitments developed in the Declaration, subsequently endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 27 January 2012;

Mindful of the Abuja Declaration on Civil Aviation Safety in Africa of 20 July 2012, affirming States' commitment to enhance aviation safety in Africa, and its endorsement by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2013;

Mindful of the role of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a framework for the development of Africa;

Mindful of the various programmes, objectives and targets currently being pursued under ICAO's No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, launched in December 2014;

Considering the importance of regional cooperation to improve aviation safety oversight in air transport industry development world-wide, and its impact on national economic development particularly in Africa;

Considering the compelling need to continuously improve aviation safety in Africa and the need to urgently find immediate and sustainable resolution to deficiencies in aviation safety oversight;

Commending ICAO for its continued technical assistance to Africa, including the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) and the Regional Aviation Safety Group for Africa-Indian Ocean (RASG-AFI) supported by AFCAC in the efforts to implement programmes and projects towards enhancing safety; and

Having considered the Global Strategy and Action Plan for the Improvement of RSOOs and the establishment of a global aviation safety oversight system adopted by the Forum on RSOOs for Global Aviation Safety held in Ezulwini, Swaziland, from 22 to 23 March 2017.

Concerned by:

- 1 The slow progress in the implementation of the critical elements of States' safety oversight systems and ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to safety, across the continent;
- 2 Insufficient number of qualified and competent technical personnel for ensuring aviation safety oversight in Africa;
- 3 Inadequacy of financial resources to ensure effective functioning of RSOOs to support States capability to improve aviation safety and meet their oversight obligations;
- 4 Duplication of membership of RSOOs across the continent and the lack of delegation of functions to RSOOs by member or partner States as appropriate;
- 5 Inadequate organizational safety culture;
- 6 Challenges in harmonization of policies, regulations, procedures and practices and weak mechanisms of sharing information and resources; and
- 7 Insufficient guidance and harmonised training mechanisms for implementation of the safety related provisions of ICAO Annexes.

Recalling:

- 1 The importance of air transport in economic development across the continent;
- 2 The role of the ICAO and AFCAC as specialized agencies in fostering the development of international civil aviation and the Memorandums of Cooperation (MOCs) between the AU Commission, AFCAC and ICAO; and

- 3 The critical roles of the RECs, RSOOs and Cooperative development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) in the implementation of regional aviation safety and continuous monitoring programmes.

Reaffirming:

The urgent need to implement national, regional and continent-wide strategies on aviation safety in Africa with a view to promoting air transport as a means for the enhancement of Africa's development and integration.

Welcoming:

- 1 The encouraging progress achieved by some States in the implementation of the critical elements of their safety oversight systems and ICAO SARPs related to safety;
- 2 The various initiatives undertaken by sector organizations in the continent by RECs and development partners; and
- 3 Establishment and operationalization of COSCAPs, RSOOs and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIOs).

Undertake to:

- 1 Meet our States' obligations under the Chicago Convention, including effective safety oversight;
- 2 Ensure the implementation of the policy objectives, commitments, regulations and strategies on aviation safety as adopted in the AFCAP;
- 3 Support the effective implementation of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), States safety oversight systems, the AFI Plan and AFI-Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (CIS);
- 4 Ensure that aviation safety is given its due consideration in States' National Development Plans
- 5 Strengthen and maintain RSOOs to effectively perform their functions, including those delegated by States; and
- 6 Support the provision of sustainable sources of funding and resources for RSOOs to carry out effective safety oversight of civil aviation.

Decide to:

- 1 Ensure political and technical commitment at the national, regional and continental level for the optimization of RSOOs in Africa;
- 2 Accelerate the establishment and strengthening of RSOOs that can effectively support regulatory oversight for aviation safety;
- 3 Ensure the strengthening of RSOOs' relationships with, and empowerment within,

their Member States;

- 4 Ensure the strengthening of the relationship of RSOOs with ICAO and coordination of activities related specifically to the delegation of functions to RSOOs by Member States;
- 5 Ensure the utilization of RSOOs for timely resolution of all Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) and deficiencies identified through the ICAO Universal Aviation Safety Oversight Audit Programme – Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA); and ensure the progressive increase in the Effective Implementation (EI) rate of the Critical Elements of States' Aviation Safety Oversight systems;
- 6 Increase the effectiveness of RSOOs through optimization of their relationship and collaboration with partners and donors;
- 7 Ensure the availability and retention of sufficient and competent/skilled aviation safety professionals by RSOOs; and
- 8 Endorse the implementation of the global strategy and action plan to improve RSOOs and the establishment of a global aviation safety oversight system.

Make a Solemn Appeal to ICAO, Financial Institutions, and all development and industry partners and organizations, to support aviation safety in Africa;

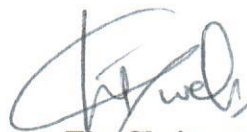
Urge States to implement, the Abuja Declaration on aviation Safety in Africa and its associated targets as may be amended, in particular provisions relating to the optimization of RSOOs, including funding and delegation of functions to these organizations as appropriate.

Urge RSOOs to actively participate in ICAO and AFCAC activities that promote safety.

Consent to the development of a Strategic Plan for Supporting and Strengthening RSOOs in the AFI Region and an action Plan to implement this Declaration; and

Request ICAO through the AFI Plan and in collaboration with AFCAC and partners, to coordinate the funding of development and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Done and adopted at Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland, on this 24th day of March 2017.



**The Chairperson
Minister of Public Works and Transport,
Kingdom of Swaziland**

